

Members

Rep. Cleo Duncan, Chairperson
Rep. Eric Gutwein
Rep. Linda Lawson
Rep. Dan Stevenson
Sen. Ron Alting
Sen. Robert Jackman
Sen. Rose Antich-Carr
Sen. Allie Craycraft



RAIL CORRIDOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

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Authority: P.L. 28-2000

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 8, 2005
Meeting Time: 1:30 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Room 156 A
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Cleo Duncan, Chairperson; Rep. Eric Gutwein; Rep. Dan Stevenson; Sen. Ron Alting; Sen. Rose Antich-Carr; Sen. Allie Craycraft.

Members Absent: Rep. Linda Lawson; Sen. Robert Jackman.

The Chair, Representative Cleo Duncan, called the first meeting of the Rail Corridor Safety Committee to order at 1:45 p.m. The Chair introduced Committee members and the staff. Committee and staff reviewed the Committee's charge.

1. Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

The Chair recognized Tom Beck of INDOT's Railroad Division. Mr. Beck distributed to Committee members Indiana's Passive Grade Crossing Improvement Program (Exhibit 1). There are approximately 9,800 rail/highway crossings in the state, including private and grade-separated. There are approximately 6,100 public/rail grade crossings, with approximately 48% of the public crossings having active warning devices. About 72% of the grade crossing accidents in CY 2004 occurred at actively warned crossings. Approximately 71% of the accidents from January 2005 through May 2005 occurred at actively warned crossings.

Mr. Beck told the Committee that the Passive Crossing Fund has been in place since 1997. Over 3,800 individual projects have received assistance from the Fund during that time period. Seventy-two counties have had grade crossing improvements completed, with the applications coming from either a local government agency or a railroad. A map attached to Exhibit 1 shows the 72 counties.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Lastly, Mr. Beck distributed a copy of the most recent organizational chart for the INDOT (Exhibit 2).

The Chair recognized Mr. Steve Hull of the Design Division of INDOT. Mr. Hull distributed Exhibit 3, Indiana Rail Network. Exhibit 3 shows that in CY 2004 Indiana ranked: (a) third nationally in the number of crashes (48) at rail grade crossings; (b) second in fatalities (25); and (c) ninth in injuries (34). Indiana has 6,271 rail grade crossings, which ranks them sixth in the nation. Mr. Hull told the Committee that from 1994 to 2004, the number of public crossings in Indiana has been reduced to 6,271 from 6,678, and the number of crashes has been reduced from 273 to 148. Mr. Hull said that INDOT receives and spends approximately \$5 M annually in federal Section 130 safety funds. In addition, Mr. Hull said that INDOT spends an additional \$5 M to \$10 M in other safety funds.

Mr. Hull told the Committee that installing lights and gates at a rail crossing costs approximately \$160,000 per crossing. He said that INDOT completes between 80 and 90 crossings per year. In CY 2004, the INDOT completed 70 projects. In CY 2005, the INDOT estimates 97 projects will be completed. Commenting further, Mr. Hull said that approximately 70% of the accidents and 100% of the fatalities involve Class I railroads, while approximately 30% of the accidents involve shortline railroads.

2. Operation Lifesaver

Representative Duncan recognized Mr. Tom Kinder, Director of Operation Lifesaver. Mr. Kinder distributed Exhibit 4, Indiana Operation Lifesaver. Mr. Kinder told the Committee that the goal of Operation Lifesaver is to reduce the number of highway-rail grade crossing crashes in CY 2005 by 10%, and raise the level of trespass awareness to the citizens of Indiana.

Mr. Kinder told the Committee that the implementation plan for Operation Lifesaver is to obtain increased participation with Indiana law enforcement. To do this, Operation Lifesaver will work closely with the Chiefs of Police Association and the Indiana Sheriffs' Association. Additionally, Operation Lifesaver will utilize appropriate local law enforcement agencies. Mr. Kinder then presented some of the statistics contained in Exhibit 4.

3. Indiana State Police Rail Grade Crossing Film and Enforcement and Education Update

Indiana State Trooper Dan Farris was recognized by the Chair. Trooper Farris distributed Indiana State Police Rail Enforcement and Education 2005 Update (Exhibit 5). Many of the statistics contained in Exhibit 5 also were part of Exhibits 3 and 4. Trooper Farris said that the State Police are attempting to expand their safety program to other State Police posts. He said that the Pendleton Post was to receive a \$30,000 grant from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), but paper-work problems precluded receipt of the FRA grant.

In addition, Trooper Farris presented a film on grade crossing safety. This film was completed by the State Police Post at Pendleton. [Note: The Legislative Services Agency has requested a copy of the film. If received, the DVD will be available from the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana.]

4. Indiana Railroad Transportation Group

The Chair called upon Ms. Cathy Hale, representing the Indiana Railroad Transportation Group. Ms. Hale distributed Exhibit 6, Indiana Railroad Transportation Group - Key Shortline Issues. Ms. Hale told the Committee that the key issues for shortline railroads are: (1) transportation enhancement; (2) threatened abandonments (the permanent ceasing of a track, route, or service); (3) 286,000 lbs. Heavy Axle Load (HAL) Ms. Hale said the 286,000 HAL is creating an

immediate threat for the Indiana shortline industry because the 286,000 lbs. is becoming the norm for the industry. Ms. Hale said that the INDOT Rail Study states that \$100 M is required to address the HAL problem.

Ms. Hale next distributed Exhibit 7, Indiana's Freight Railroads. This exhibit provided an overview of Indiana's freight railroads and a map of where they travel.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 13, 2005, at 2:00 p.m. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.